

22 JUN 1966

Executive Registry
46-2802

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Agency's Image, Chiefs of Station Seminar

1. I have reviewed the comments of the Chiefs of Station and my views and recommendations as to the Agency's image and our public posture are as follows:

Despite the current rash of publicity in the public press, I believe we have a deep reservoir of goodwill in the American public. This goodwill can only be expressed indirectly. Our Personnel Recruitment Program, the Domestic Contact Service Program, and our extensive other relationships with American business, universities, and the public reflect an understanding of our public relations problem and confidence in our people and our program. We at headquarters frequently do not sufficiently distinguish between publicity per se and unfavorable publicity. I think we should give the American public more credit for reading through the self-serving, critical comments of columnists, editorials, and private and public officials.

2. The Agency's public policy has been predicated historically on the premise that we are a clandestine organization whereas, actually, there is much we can talk about which does not affect clandestine programs, sources, and methods or sensitive activities. I feel we can make public appearances in a quiet, conservative way speaking of our functions, purposes, national security relationships, and some of our internal organization, but, of course, avoiding controversial or national topics. Our non-vocal friends are troubled that we do not present some form of a public program. To improve our public posture, correct misinformation about the Agency, and to gradually reach those groups who can be helpful to us, I suggest the following:

a. Promote visits and briefings of selected newsmen.

b. Accept more invitations to speak before organized groups, such as business associations, academic and business conferences, universities, and similar organized group meetings.

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Pages 1-3

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c. On an off-the-record basis, provide background briefings on pertinent topics to selected newsmen to give them basic intelligence guidance on these matters which in turn will develop appreciation and understanding of the Agency and enhance our posture of objectivity.

d. Continue to pursue and perhaps enlarge our contacts with universities and the public in our overt processes such as the Recruitment Program.

e. Encourage our friends to speak up on our behalf from time to time.

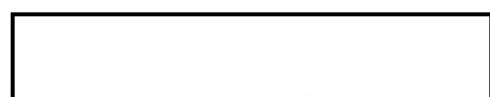
3. Regardless of the above, we should expect attacks upon the Agency and challenges to our activities. Those that are pure nonsense, such as the "Boy Scout story," we can promptly and directly deny; whereas with those of an intelligence operational nature we can either:

a. Respond through Congressional statements;

b. Respond through the Department of State or other components of Government; or

c. Remain quiet depending on the nature of the issue at hand.

In principle, I think we are losing by our policy of silence and, to arrest this trend, I suggest we begin to fight back against unfounded or misinformed criticism.



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R. L. Bannerman
Deputy Director
for Support

Att: Summary of Comments--CIA's Image

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SECRETCIA'S IMAGESummary of Notes from COS SeminarThe Status of the Agency's Image

Could be improved	8
Is being hurt	3
No real damage yet	2

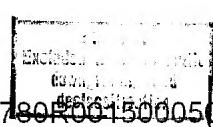
Origin of the Problem

Misinformation about Agency	3
Inherent part of our culture	2
Negative press policy	1
Lack of strong public relations program	1
Leaks to news media	1
Not enough leaks on successes	1
Lack of appreciation by news media of damage caused by its exposures	1
No comment	3

How to Improve the Agency's Image*

Positive public relations program	8
Improve quality of personnel, security, cover, and performance	4
Improve relations with Congress and other agencies . .	4
"Grin and bear it" except for answering gravest charges	3
More rigid control of media contacts	1
Stop revealing operations to news media	1

*Some of the 13 responses contained more than one recommendation. Suggestions for a positive public relations program included: use of experts and a special Agency group concerned with "image;" broader contacts with students and educators; furnishing sanitized success stories to selected news media; explaining the role of espionage in preserving democratic principles; and getting influential public officials and private individuals to speak out for the Agency.

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Approved For Release 2006/07/14 : CIA-RDP84-O0780R001500050040-9

John F. Kennedy
TRANSMITTAL SLIP

DATE
7/14

TO: DDS *VV* RBL

ROOM NO. BUILDING

REMARKS:

(Recd in 02/5 4/5/67)

FROM:

ROOM NO. BUILDING EXTENSION